

Testimony for the Appropriations Committee

February 24, 2022

My name is Walter Rice and I live in Rocky Hill. I am testifying on the Governor's proposed budget H. B. No. 5037 (COMM) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023 that unfortunately does not include critical funding for our safety net providers and their employees.

After decades of underfunding, Connecticut's direct support providers are in crisis mode because the effects of the pandemic have impacted their ability to attract and retain direct care workers and other employees. This staff is critically important to the safety and well-being of many of Connecticut's residents with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) including my own family.

My 48 year old daughter has profound Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. I am in my eighties and unable to provide her with the care she requires. I am very concerned that the direct support provider who oversees her care is having an exceedingly difficult time attracting and retaining employees simply because the provider cannot offer adequate compensation for the difficult work involved. Caring for IDD individuals requires much dedication and is exceedingly difficult to provide on a continual basis. Indeed, increasingly often, potential or existing employees simply choose to go work for such as a big box store for more money and much simpler work. I am extremely concerned for the future of my daughter and the other individuals in her agency's care.

With out your help